

MRS. HALL, DENYING GUILT ON STAND, SAYS SHE ALWAYS TRUSTED HUSBAND

Widow Calm, Dignified As She Bares Details Of Intimate Home Life

By LEO J. CASEY
GRAPHIC Staff Correspondent

SOMERVILLE, N. J., Nov. 27.—Pale but calm, Mrs. Frances Stevens Hall this afternoon went on the witness stand in the Hall-Mills murder trial and bravely bared her intimate life with the slain rector of the Church of St. John the Evangelist.

A hushed silence hung over the crowded courtroom as the defendant's voice, low, yet distinct, floated over the tiers and painted her as a loving and believing wife right up to the day her husband's bullet-riddled body was found with that of Mrs. Eleanor R. Mills on the old Phillips Farm.

The widow, in black save for a

bit of white piping which protruded at the neck, sat as motionless as a statue as she answered the questions of Robert H. McCarter, chief attorney for the defense. Occasionally her eyes wandered from the white-haired McCarter to the tuft-haired Simpson, the special

gray-gloved hands, folded, rested in her lap.

There was a ripple of suppressed excitement when Mrs. Hall, her face appearing to become more gray, told of her friendship for Mrs. Mills—the woman who stole her love and indirectly, at least, thrust her into widowhood.

Tells of Aiding Mrs. Mills

She explained how when Mrs. Mills, whom she regarded as a good-living church worker, not a siren, became ill she, Mrs. Hall, took her to the hospital, contributed to the payment of the bill and then took the choir singer home.

She spoke of her vacation, the last with her husband, in 1922, just a few weeks before the murder. They had gone to Isfeld where, still unsuspecting that her husband was unfaithful, she bestowed upon him that love which had been his since the day of their marriage.

She had never heard of his love diary, of the burning missives of passion which passed between him and Mrs. Mills.

Only the day before the killing she and the minister had driven to Lake Hopatcong and taken along as their guests Mrs. Mills and Mrs. Minna Clark, described during the trial as a "love spy."

Couldn't Understand Bill

The murder day she went with Dr. Hall and Willie for a ride. He worked around the house and was

Sister-in-Law Aids Mrs. Hall



MRS. FRANK VOORHEES, sister of the slain rector, in foreground, with two friends, L. S. Webb and Margaret Carter Nicholas (in black), appeared in court today ready to take the stand and testify in behalf of the accused widow and her brothers.

visited by Mrs. Clark. Mrs. Mills called and asked to see the minister. There was something about the doctor's bill she couldn't quite understand.

That night the family had supper at the usual time. Then the phone rang. It was the message to which the prosecution has paid so much attention. Mrs. Hall said she started to answer the call when her husband lifted the receiver from the upstairs extension.

She denied hearing any part of the conversation.

The minister told her he had to go out and she and her niece played games. She retired about 10.30 o'clock, but was unable to sleep.

Nursery Rhymes A La Hall-Mills



Simple Simon went a-fishing For to catch a whale; All the water he had got Was in the Mirror's pail.

The absence of her husband was too much for her.

Some time later she aroused Willie and asked him to accompany her to the church. She thought the clergyman might be there, finishing up some work. The next morning she called the police.

Mrs. Hall said she married the minister on July 20, 1911, being seven years his senior. She was born in 1874.

McCarter produced the family Bible, containing the birth records of all three defendants. Then he asked in whose writing these records were.

"My mother's." The voice seemed to soften and tremble with emotion with this reply.

Met Hall in Church

Q. How old were you when you moved to New Brunswick? A. Two months.

Q. Before you were married, where did you attend church? A. Christ Church.

Q. Did you then have any connections with the Church of St. John, Evangelist? A. Yes, I taught Sunday school there.

Q. Did you meet Dr. Hall there? A. Yes.

Q. When were you married? A. On July 20, 1911.

Q. How much older were you than Dr. Hall? A. Seven years.

Q. Where did you live then? A. Where I do now, on Nichol avenue.

Husband Was Devoted

Q. When your husband died, how many automobiles did you have? A. Two, a Dodge and a Case.

Q. Which did you drive? A. The Dodge.

Q. Did William drive? A. No.

Q. Was your husband a devoted husband? A. Absolutely.

Q. Did you notice any change in his attitude? A. None.

Q. Did your brother have a pistol? A. Yes.

Q. Did your husband ever do

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Dr. Straton's Mail Shows Interest in Hall Trial Series

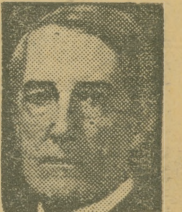
By REV. JOHN ROACH STRATON
D. D.

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The volume of mail coming in, containing comments called forth by this series of articles on the Hall-Mills case, would seem to justify such a discussion, both from the standpoint of the writer of the articles and of the newspaper syndicate handling them.

As was to be expected, both praise and censure are found in these letters.

Two letters have just arrived in the same mail. One writer, in roasting both the paper and myself for the articles, among other scathing things, says to the editor:—



"In reading to-day's instalment (November 17), which, by the way, I consider far from a startling analysis of the case, I note that it barely touches his subject at all, but simply contains his own propaganda about his hobby of Almighty God, Jesus and the Bible, all of which are entirely irrelevant.

"Why so much space should be given to this egotistical, self-appointed ally of the Almighty in your paper, when space is so valuable that you often have to omit some of your advertising, I cannot understand, unless he pays well for the publicity it gives him, which seems to be his principal aim in life. I believe that the vast majority of your readers will be disgusted with these articles."

Fortunately, this writer's sneering references to the "Almighty," Jesus, the Bible, et cetera, sufficiently classify him, and no further comment is necessary.

Praise in Second Letter

In the same mail there was another letter addressed to me, containing the following characteristic paragraph:—

"Keep up your good work on the Hall-Mills case, until the public thoroughly learns the lesson this case so plainly teaches. This can only be accomplished by publicity. Stick to it until you succeed, and your reward will be forthcoming, just as sure as penalties are exacted for wrongdoing. You are performing the most important mission of your career, in exposing the workings of the devil."

So it goes, and such is life! Especially in the newspaper world and the realm of moral and spiritual values!

It is reassuring and encouraging, however, to be able to say that commendatory letters have far outnumbered those of a denunciatory character.

More than two hundred commendatory letters came in in one day, and there have been only a sprinkling of these denunciatory epistles; and, as in the case of the one quoted above, they have usually carried earmarks that gave away the true character and standing of the writers.

Great Issues Involved

I have been much gratified to receive such letters as the one just quoted, showing that the newspaper readers of today have a pretty clear understanding of the truth that the great issues of religion are really involved in this terrific tragedy, and, therefore, that a discussion of such things as

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MRS. E. W. HALL

prosecutor who seeks to prove her guilty.

A small gold band on her left hand finger—her wedding ring—and a string of pearls constituted the only jewelry she wore. Her

Simpson Secretly Gathers Data for Mistrial Motion

SOMERVILLE, N. J., Nov. 27.—Unknown to the defense, Special Prosecutor Alexander Simpson has been quietly gathering evidence upon which to base a motion for mistrial of the Hall-Mills case in the event he is defeated.

This became known today, along with the information that Inspector John J. Underwood has seven affidavits from persons who swear that at least one juror was sound

son. If he feels that the state has no chance to convict Mrs. Frances Stevens Hall and her brothers, Henry and Willie, he may spring the anticipated motion. In the event it is granted, a new trial would probably be ordered immediately.

Several days ago, it has been learned, certain spectators in sympathy with the prosecution informed Simpson that some of the jurors were assuming a most lethargic attitude. One, anyway, so it was reported, had dozed quietly while Mrs. Jane Gibson, the "pig woman" and star witness for the state, testified from the hospital cot which had been moved into the courtroom.

Lawyers are agreed that if the special prosecutor can prove such to have been the case he has excellent grounds for the projected mistrial motion.



Alexander Simpson



J. J. Underwood

asleep on several occasions when important testimony was being taken.

State's Hidden Threat

The mistrial scheme is regarded here as the hidden threat of Simp-